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Menu

Nelligan receives honorable mention for CRA Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Awards

Trevor Nelligan, a junior in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Texas A&M University, was named honorable mention in the 2016 Computing Research Association's (CRA) Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Awards. Nelligan received the honor for his work in the Sketch Recognition Lab (SRL).

"I have been involved in several projects that involve educational software, including Mechanix, Persketchtivity, and CourseSketch," Nelligan said. "These programs provide a novel and intuitive approach to educational software, utilizing sketch-based interaction and intelligent interface design."

Nelligan works under Dr. Tracy Hammond, SRL director and associate professor in computer science and engineering at Texas A&M. He was originally hired in 2014 to work on the Mechanix project — a large-scale educational program used at Texas A&M, Georgia Tech, and LeTourneau University. This new user interface was integrated into the classrooms of both LeTourneau and Georgia Tech.

At the end of the fall 2014 semester, he first-authored a paper on User Interface developments, and later presented a poster at the Intelligent User Interfaces 2015 conference, where it received the Best Poster Award. In September 2015 Nelligan received another award for his poster at the Texas A&M Industrial Affiliates Program poster competition. He also co-authored a second paper published at the 9th Workshop on the Impact of Pen and Touch Technology on Education conference (WIPTTE 2015), on the results of the updated system on learning at LeTourneau University.

During the fall 2014 semester, Hammond received an NSF award for another project, PerSketchTivity, a system to teach drafting and perspective drawing to engineering majors. Nelligan started to work on this project with a design student and developed the sketch recognition algorithms behind the system, quickly creating a testable system.

During 2015, he also become an Undergraduate Research Ambassador and has been encouraging undergraduate students to participate in research.

"Trevor is a wonderful role model and mentor for other undergraduate students who may be thinking about pursuing research in computer science," Hammond said.

The CRA award program recognizes undergraduate students in North American universities who show outstanding research potential in an area of computing research. In order to be eligible for this award, the student must be nominated by two faculty members and the head of their department must sign a statement saying they are in good standing and eligible for the award.

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